

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1520

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

S E C R E T JIDDA 4165

LIMDIS

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SA, XF, YS, MU, KU

SUBJ: REFLECTIONS ON THE DHOFAR WAR

REF : A. MUSCAT 585; B. KUWAIT 2208; C. ABU DHABI 1191;

D. SANAA 1378; E. MANAMA 644; F. ABU DHABI 1230

SUMMARY: WE DOUBT THAT THE MORE CONCILITARY POLICY
TOWARDS THE PDRY REGIME SUGGESTED BY EMBASSY KUWAIT
AS A MEANS OF GETTING AT THE ROOTS OF THE DHOFAR WAR
WILL HAVE MUCH APPEAL TO THE SAUDIS. THE DHOFAR
REBELLION IS A RELATIVELY LESSER PART OF THE SAG
CONCERN WITH THE PDRY REGIME WHICH IS VIEWED AS POS-

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ING A THREAT TO SAUDI SECURITY. AS LONG AS THE ADENI

REGIME REMAINS MARXIST WE THINK THAT THE SAG WOULD PREFER TO SEE IT ISOLATED ON THE PENINSULA -- REGARDLESS OF WHETHER IT STOPS SUPPORT FOR THE DHOFAR REBELS. WE THINK THAT THE SAG HAS RECENTLY COME AROUND TO A REALISTIC POLICY TOWARDS THE PDRY: MODERATION OF ITS FORMER IMPLACABLE HOSTILITY; SUPPORT FOR THE HAMDI GOVERNMENT; QUITE GENEROUS FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE OMAN GOVERNMENT; POLICY GUIDANCE TO THE GULF STATES OTHER THAN KUWAIT AND A NEW WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE WITH KUWAIT. IN ANY EVENT, THE USG HAS ONLY A MARGINAL CAPACITY TO INFLUENCE SAG POLICIES TOWARDS THE PDRY. IF WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO BACK UP POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS WITH ACTIONS, THE SAG IS UNLIKELY TO HEED OUR ADVICE. END SUMMARY.

1. WE FOUND EMBASSY MUSCAT'S "REFLECTIONS ON THE WAR IN DHOFAR" AN INTERESTING AND USEFUL DOCUMENT AND THE COMMENTS ON IT BY OTHER POSTS PROVOCATIVE. FROM THE VANTAGE POINT OF JIDDA WE CONCLUDE THAT THE IMAGINATIVE APPROACH PUT FORWARD BY EMBASSY KUWAIT DOES NOT STAND MUCH CHANCE OF GETTING OFF THE GROUND BECAUSE A KEY TO IT IS SAUDI COOPERATION AND WE DON'T BELIEVE THAT LIKELY TO BE FORTHCOMING. (THOUGH WE NOTE THE INTERESTING REPORT IN ABU DHABI 1230 OF COOPERATION BETWEEN KUWAIT AND SAUDI ARABIA.)

2. THE SAUDI CONCERN WITH THE REGIME IN THE PDRY HAS RELATIVELY LITTLE TO DO WITH THE REGIME'S SUPPORT FOR THE DHOFAR REBELLION. FOR THE SAUDIS THAT IS SYMPTOMATIC OF THE KIND OF TROUBLE THAT A RADICAL MARXIST REGIME CAN CAUSE FOR ITS NEIGHBORS. THE SAUDIS' MAIN CONCERN IS THE THREAT FROM THE PDRY TO THEIR OWN SECURITY EITHER DIRECTLY OR (ESPECIALLY) THROUGH THE YAR. THE SAUDIS HAVE LONG DISAGREED WITH AND BEEN ANNOYED BY THE KUWAITI POLICY OF GIVING ASSISTANCE TO THE PDRY IN THE HOPE OF WEANING THE REGIME OUT OF ITS ISOLATION AND TOWARDS A POLICY OF MODERATION. THE SAUDIS WERE PERSUADED BY THE EGYPTIANS TO ADOPT A "CARROT AND STICK" APPROACH TO THE PDRY BUT ONLY TO THE EXTENT THAT THE CARROT IS DANGLED, BUT NOT SECRET

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SO CLOSE THAT THE PDRY GETS A TASTE OF IT. THE SAUDIS HAVE A WELL-DEVELOPED SKEPTICISM CONCERNING THE PRESENCE OF "GOOD ELEMENTS" AND "BAD ELEMENTS" WITHIN THE NF. THEY DON'T LIKE OR TRUST ANY OF THEM.

3. THE SAUDI POSITION HAS BEEN THAT FOR THE PDRY REGIME TO ENJOY THE CARROT, IT MUST TAKE A NUMBER OF MEASURES TO SHOW THAT IT HAS CHANGED IT WAYS, CHIEF

AMONG THEM STOPPING SUPPORT FOR THE DHOFAR REBELLION. WHILE THIS WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT AND POSITIVE STEP IN SAUDI EYES, IT WOULD BE ESSENTIALLY AN EARNEST OF PDRY GOOD INTENTIONS AND NOT SUFFICIENT IN AND OF ITSELF TO BRING ABOUT A CHANGE IN SAUDI ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE ADENI REGIME.

4. THE SAG, LIKE SOME OTHER GOVERNMENTS WITH STRONG AND OFFICIAL "ANTICOMMUNIST" POLICIES, HAS A POSSIBLE EXAGGERATED FEAR OF THE ABILITY OF COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY TO TAINT THE MASSES AND OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS TO SUBVERT NON-COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS. THIS BEING THE CASE, WE THINK THAT THE PRESENT ISOLATION OF THE PDRY REGIME IS A CAUSE OF SOME SATISFACTION TO THE SAG. WE DOUBT, IN FACT, THAT A MARXIST PDRY REGIME SLEEK AND PROSPEROUSS FROM THE BENEFITS OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE WITH ITS NEIGHBORS WOULD BE MORE ATTRACTIVE TO THE SAUDIS THAN THE PRESENT IMPOVERISHED AND FRACTIOUS REGIME, THOUGH THEY WOULD PROBABLY BE PREPARED TO LIVE AND LET LIVE.

5. FROM WHAT WE KNOW OF THE ADEN REGIME WE ARE OF THE OPINION THAT IT IS NOT LIKELY TO CHANGE ITS CHARACTER OR AIMS FOR THE SAKE OF SAUDI GOLD, THOUGH WE THINK IT MIGHT BE WORTH THE SAUDI EFFORT TO FIND OUT. WE THINK THE SAUDI APPROACH OF PROMISING NOW AND DELIVERING ONLY WHEN THEIR CONDITIONS HAVE BEEN MET IS PRUDENT. THE ADENI REGIME HAS THRIVED ON THE HOSTILITY OF ITS ARAB NEIGHBROS BUT WE DO NOT THINK THAT IT WOULD WITHER, OR ITS GRIP ON THE COUNTRY NECESSARILY EVEN WEAKEN IF IT WERE TO BE WELCOMED BACK INTO THE ARAB FOLD. WE, THEREFORE, FAVOR THE "QUARANTINE" OR "SHIELD" POLICIES TOWARDS THE PDRY
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PROPOSED BY EMBASSIES ABU DHABI AND SANAA.

6. AT THE RISK OF SEEMING COMPLACENT OR PAROCHIAL, WE THINK THAT THE SAG IS FINALLY FOLLOWING POLICIES APPROPRIATE TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE SOUTHERN PENNINSULA: IT HAS MODERATED ITS FORMER IMPLACABLE AND INEFFECTIVE ACTIVE OPPOSITON TO THE PDRY AND SHOW ITS WILLINGNESS TO TALK. IT HAS DECIDED TO SUPPORT THE MODERATE HAMDY REGIME IN THE YAR AND WE HOPE THAT IWILL SOON BE BACKING UP THIS SUPPORT WITH AN ACTIVE PROGRAM OF MILITARY AND CONTINUED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. THE SAG SEEMS TO HAVE COME TO A SOMEWHAT BELATED AWARENESS OF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARDS THE OMAN GOVERNMENT AND HAS BEEN PROFIDING MUCH-NEEDED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. IT IS ALSO REMAIN-

ING FIRMIN ITS OPPOSITION TO RECOGNITION OF THE PDRY
BY THE GULF STATES AND BY SO DOING IS EXERCISING --
ALBEIT IN A NEGATIVE SENSE -- LEADERSHIP VIS A VIS
THE PDRY. WE HAVE NO GREAT CONFIDENCE THAT THE SAUDI
POLICY WILL "WORK" IN THE SENSE OF REFORMING OR
BASICALLY CHANGING THE ADENI REGIME OR ENDING ITS
SUPPORT FOR THE DHOFAR REBELS, BUT WE DO THINK THAT
IT IS A POLICY WHICH IS DEFENSIBLE IN ARAB COUNCILS
AND MINIMIZES SUPPORT AND SYMPATHY FOR THE PDRY WHILE
AT THE SAME TIME LIMITING THE MISCHIEF-MAKING POTENTIAL
OF THE PDRY IN THE AREA.

7. A FINAL POINT WHICH SHOULD BE MADE IS THAT WE
HAVE A QUITE MARGINAL ABILITY TO INFLUENCE SAUDI POLICY
TOWARD THE PDRY. THE SAUDI ARE GRATEFUL FOR ANY
INTELLIGENCE WE CAN GIVE THEM BUT THEY FEEL THAT THEY
KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT IS GOIN ON THAN WE DO. MORE-
OVER, THEY ARE CONSCIOUS THAT THEY ARE THE ONES WHOSE
BASIC INTERESTS ARE AT STAKE, THAT THEY ARE THE ONESE
WHO WILL PAY THE PIPER IF OUR ADVICE TURNS OUT BAD.
THE SAG IS NOT ONLY WILLING BUT EAGER TO WORK WITH US
IN REDUCING COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN THE RED SEA AREA.
HOWEVER, AS THEY HAVE MADE CLEAR ON SOMALIA (RE THE
POSSIBILITY OF ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF ARMS) THEY WANT
MORE THAN JUST OUR ADVICE; THEY WANT OUR PROMISE OF
ACTIVE COOPERATION BEFORE THEY FOLLOW A PATH WE
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RECOMMEND TO THEM.
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